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ABSTRACT

In December of 1970, teachers in the Mesa Public Schools will design the procedures by which they contract with the Mesa School to produce certain student outcomes for a given unit of study in the spring. These will be specified in a "contract" written by the school board. Teams will "bid" on the contract, submitting dollar estimates of all cost variables relating to the successful completion of the contract. Key variables in the contracting process may include the following: time; number and kind of educational personnel to be used; materials, supplies, and equipment; building costs; and evaluation. Negotiations are primarily concerned with equating means to projected outcomes. In all cases, costs are related to student outcomes. Teachers will need to be trained during the summer in how to negotiate with the board, specify student outcomes, package curriculum to meet the unit objectives, and assess student learning along required dimensions. (JA)

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VIII

MESA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CONSIDERATION OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN THE EPDA SUMMER TRAINING SESSIONS

EMPORIA KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
TEACHER CORPS
RESOURCE CENTER
ITEM NO. 553
FOR INSPECTION ONLY

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CONSIDERATION OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT

IN THE EPDA SUMMER TRAINING SESSIONS

Project Requirements

In December of 1970 teachers in the Mesa Public Schools will design the procedures by which they contract with the Mesa School Board to produce certain student outcomes for a given unit of study in the Spring.

These will be specified in a "contract" written by the Mesa School Board. School teams will "bid" on the contract submitting dollar estimates of all cost variables relating to the successful completion of the contract.

Key variables in the contracting process may include the following:

1. Time
2. Number and kind of educational personnel to be used
3. Materials, supplies, equipment
4. Building costs
5. Evaluation (testing costs)
   (What will be accepted as evidence by the Board of successful completion of the contract being met)

It is conceivable that the Board would accept one bid and not some others. It is conceivable the Board could accept many bids, rejecting some, modifying others.

Negotiations are primarily concerned with equating means to projected outcomes. The Board may wish to insert a penalty clause or a cost plus clause in the contract. In all cases, costs are related to student outcomes. No pre-determined means are acceptable without question as for example, class size, base teacher pay, number of aides, number of related support services, number and kind of differentiated roles, degree of specialization needed in staff support, the efficacy of some types of structures over others.

What is paramount are what students need to know, do and feel when the period of instruction/learning is terminated by contract.

Skills Necessary In Order To Realize the Outcomes (Summer Training)

It is apparent that if we are to specify what it is that should happen with students, teachers will need to be trained to engage in an extensive and somewhat detailed negotiation with the Board over contracts. Some or all of the skills listed below may be needed.

1. Ability to specify precisely student outcomes in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains in order to become accountable for student progress.

2. Ability to "package" curriculum in ways which optimally meet the unit objectives in the time limit required for maximum student achievement.

3. If all children are to learn some "baseline" skills and knowledges, teachers will have to be trained or subcontract diagnostic skills in various subject areas in order to take maximum advantage of limited manpower.

4. Ability to assess adequately and accurately student learning along the required dimensions. Good background in tests and measures, and other methods of evaluation (since teacher made tests will probably be used because of the nature of the short units involved).

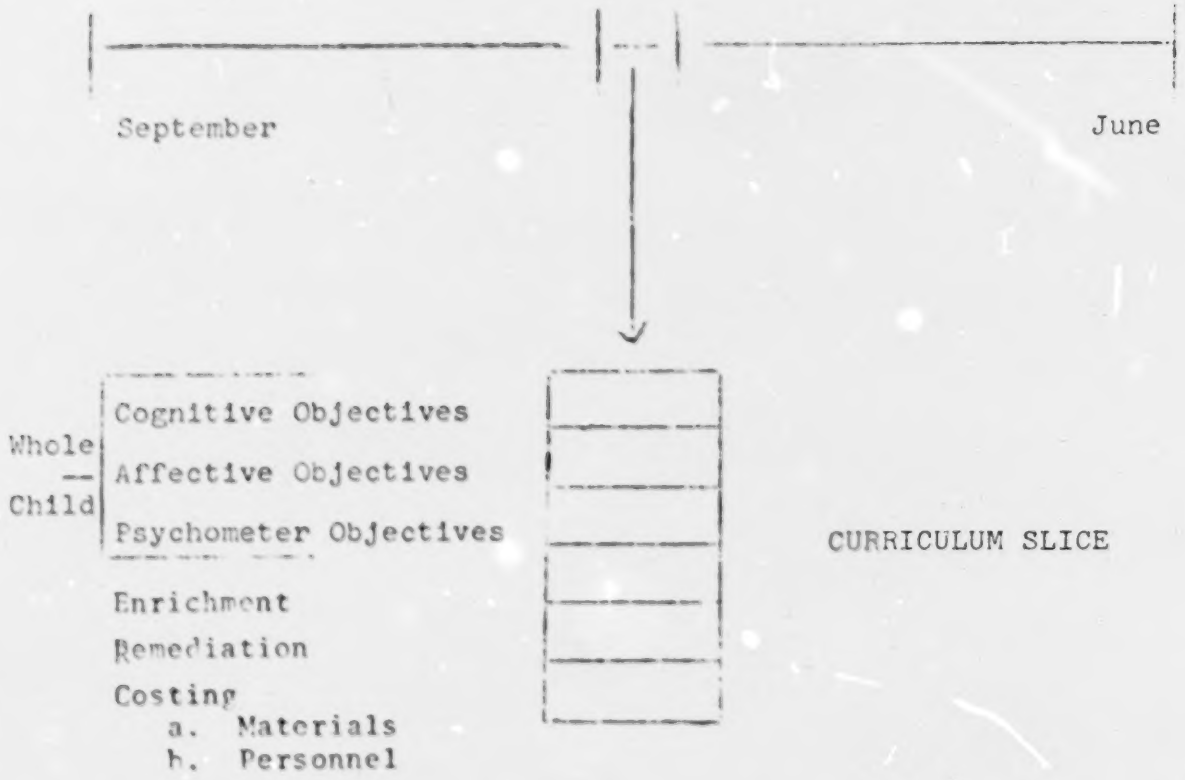
5. Ability to discuss adult-to adult professional problems and the assignment of pupils and other professional personnel to work groups; ability to assess the relative contributions and strengths of staff members in order to meet the "contract" specifications; the ability to assess each other's contribution when the unit is completed.

6. Ability to negotiate over contract specifications with the Board of Education; extensive dialogue sessions regarding performance with another group of adults, lay citizens in this regard.

7. Ability to cost and quantify key variables related to contracting with the Board of Education regarding pupil behavioral change.

The summer will see only three weeks devoted to curriculum development. It is impossible to translate an entire curriculum into the kind of performance terms necessary to "contract" for a full year of student learning, or even a quarter. For this reason "curriculum slices" will need to be developed of approximately three days to two weeks of instructional time.

CURRICULUM CONTINUUM



The Student and the Project

We have said for so long that the student is the heart of the school that we have believed that all practices which have developed over time meet the needs of students. What the project says is a very pragmatic question. If students are the center of schools and we can define what they need to know to function successfully in our society, which professional skills and under what conditions is learning optimal to satisfy society's requirements for the schools?

Contracting forces us to consider all available alternatives, forces us to defend our choice empirically and later with hard data about what we do in schools with students. Differentiated staffing seen in this context is clearly a means to the end, that is, the student and his learning.

Concomitantly, the project will provide teachers with the information to adequately assess what they can do with children given the currert resources and specify what additional resources would be needed to meet the objectives. The project will give us the means to examine our intentions and to determine if, in fact, we are student centered.